

TESTIMONY
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
Monday, February 25, 2019

**HB 7140, AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION REGARDING SEAT BELTS, MOTORCYCLE HELMETS, THE OPERATION
LIFESAVER PROGRAM, MAINTENANCE VEHICLES AND TRANSPORTATION STATUTES**

My name is Pina Violano and I am testifying on behalf of Yale New Haven Health System in support of **HB 7140, AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REGARDING SEAT BELTS, MOTORCYCLE HELMETS, THE OPERATION LIFESAVER PROGRAM, MAINTENANCE VEHICLES AND TRANSPORTATION STATUTES**. With over 38 years' experience as a nurse in critical care and emergency medicine, I know firsthand about the devastations that impact individuals, their families, and the community as a whole. In my role as Manager for Yale New Haven Hospital's Injury Prevention, Community Outreach and Research program, I am responsible for implementing evidenced-based interventions that are proven to prevent injuries and ultimately save lives. HB 7140 seeks to change the seat belt requirement statute and would be a major step forward in attempting to reduce avoidable injuries and deaths on our roadways.

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death among those aged 1-54 in the United States and seat belt use is one of the most effective ways to reduce deaths and serious injuries to vehicle occupants during a motor vehicle crash. More than 2.5 million drivers and passengers were treated in emergency departments as the result of being injured in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2015 and over 22,000 people died. Of those who died, more than half were between the ages of 13 and 44 years old and did not wear seatbelts at the time of the crash. At Yale New Haven, we value the safety of everyone, regardless of age, traveling in motor vehicles and we believe that implementing this data driven law change would save countless lives.

Two years ago, you and your colleagues took an historic step by approving changes to the existing child restraint law that brought CT to the forefront of child passenger safety. This proposed bill would be a similar history making change for our state. Not only are passengers putting themselves at risk by not using a seat belt, they are also putting the driver and other passengers at risk as their body could become a projectile in a crash if not properly restrained. A body flying through a vehicle during a crash can seriously injure or kill the driver or fellow passengers. Another concern is vehicle airbags when a seat belt is not properly used. An airbag is only effective if the passenger is in the proper place at time of deployment. A seat belt is an integral part of making sure that happens. We believe it is time for the state to make it a requirement for all passengers in motor vehicles to use their seat belts.

On behalf of Yale New Haven Health, thank you for your consideration of our testimony. We urge you to support HB 7140 to move it forward in the legislative process in hopes of it becoming a much needed change to our current statute. (See YNHH data on page 2.)

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Year	Total number of patients who were admitted to Yale New Haven Hospital's (YNHH) following a Motor Vehicle Crash (MVC)	Total Number of patients who died as a result of their injuries sustained from a MVC	Total Number of patients who were unrestrained at the time of the MVC
2013	603	25	100
2014	544	17	102
2015	573	13	111
2016	588	17	124
2017	651	14	119
2018	623	24	110
Total	3,582	110	666